

Message Text

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SUMMARY PEKING TRIED TO EXPLAIN THE "GANG OF FOUR'S" PLOT AGAINST THE REGIME AND THEIR FORGED MAO "WILL" BUT THE EXPLANATION PROBABLY RAISES MORE QUESTIONS THAN IT ANSWERS. CENTER LEADERSHIP TURNS OUT TO CONTINUE TO GIVE HIGH PROFILE TO HUA KUO-FENG, YEH CHIEN-YING AND LI HSIEN-NIEN. REGIME ATTENTION TO PRODUCTION CONTINUED BUT NO POLICY GUIDANCE HAS YET EMERGED FROM THE ONGOING CONFERENCES. PROVINCIAL PROBLEMS WITH GANG SUPPORTERS REMAIN A MAJOR FOCUS OF REGIME ATTENTION.

ON THE EXTERNAL SIDE, LOCAL PRC MEDIA ORGANS CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE CARTER APPOINTMENTS. PEKING IS CLEARLY SIGNALLING THAT SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS ARE NOT ON THE UPTURN, AND THE CHIEF PRC NEGOTIATOR FOR THE BORDER TALKS HAS BEEN BUSY ESCORTING A VISITING ROMANIAN DELEGATION AROUND CHINA. NCNA HAS CARRIED A BRIEF-WRAP UP ON THE VIETNAMESE PARTY MEETING. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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END SUMMARY

CENTER LEADERSHIP EXPLAINS THE PURGE AND PROMOTES PRODUCTION

MODERNIZATION

1. A PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT COMMENTARY (DECEMBER 17) SETS OUT THE REGIME'S CASE AGAINST THE "GANG OF FOUR" AND THEIR PLOT TO FORGE "ACT ACCORDING TO PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN" AS A MEANS OF USURPING PARTY AND STATE POWER. THE COMMENTARY PROVIDES FEW NEW INSIGHTS INTO THE GANG'S EFFORTS, BUT DOES RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT MAO'S APRIL 30 INSTRUCTIONS TO HUA KUO-FENG. THESE INSTRUCTIONS INCLUDING "WITH YOU IN CHARGE, I AM AT EASE," HAVE BEEN USED AS THE BASIS FOR THE REGIME'S CLAIM THAT HUA IS THE PERSONAL CHOICE OF MAO, BUT THE CONTEXT OF THE QUOTATION LINKS IT SPECIFICALLY TO PROBLEMS IN DEALING WITH THE CAMPAIGN TO CRITICIZE TENG HSIAO-PING IN THE PROVINCES (HK 14685 AND PEKING 2615). LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

2. MEANWHILE THE REGIME CONTINUED TO HIGHLIGHT ITS INTEREST IN PRODUCTION AND MODERNIZATION WITH REPEATED REFERENCES TO THE ONGOING SECOND LEARNING-FROM-TACHAI CONFERENCE (WR 50) AND WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT A PREPARATORY CONFERENCE FOR A LEARNING-FROM-TACHING CONFERENCE NEXT YEAR WAS ALSO IN SESSION. NO NEW POLICY LINES HAVE EMERGED SO FAR WITH MOST SPEECHES REITERATING STANDARD ANTI-GANG OF FOUR PROPAGANDA. AT BOTH MEETINGS, THERE WAS A LARGE LEADERSHIP TURNOUT HEADED BY CHAIRMAN HUA AND VICE CHAIRMAN YEH BUT THE ABSENCE OF PEKING BOSS/POLITBURO MEMBER WU TEH COULD BE A CAUSE FOR CONCERN (HK 14762). CENTER LEADERS APPOINTED TO THE TOP SHANGHAI SLOTS IN OCTOBER WERE ACTIVE IN RECEIVING A ROMANIAN DELEGATION, BUT LOCAL SHANGHAI LEADERS WHO HAD EARLIER BEEN IN TROUBLE -- MA HSING-YUAN, WANG HSIU-CHEN AND HSU CHING-HSIEN -- DID NOT APPEAR. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

INVESTIGATIONS UNDERWAY IN A NUMBER OF PROVINCES
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3. MASS RALLIES HELD IN KWANGTUNG AND YUNNAN INDICATE THAT INVESTIGATIONS ARE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY AND THAT PURGES OF FAIRLY WIDE SCOPE MAY OCCUR. AT A DECEMBER 16 RALLY OF 100,000 IN KWANGTUNG, CCP FIRST SECRETARY WEI KUO-CHING BRIEFLY MENTIONED THE NEED FOR LENIENCY IN TREATMENT OF SUPPORTERS OF THE "GANG OF FOUR." SECRETARY CHIAO LIN-YI, ON THE OTHER HAND, LAID HEAVY EMPHASIS ON THE "SERIOUS" NATURE OF THE SABOTAGE COMMITTED BY THE GANG, AND CALLED FOR "THOROUGH CRITICISM" OF THEM. CHIAO ALLUDED TO CONTINUED UNREST IN THE PROVINCE AND CALLED ON THE MASSES TO "TRACK DOWN REACTIONARY POLITICAL RUMORS AND POSTERS" AND TO "DEAL RESOLUTE BLOWS AT THEIR CREATORS." IT DOES NOT APPEAR LIKELY THAT FACTIONAL ELEMENTS WILL ACTUALLY RECEIVE LENIENT TREATMENT FROM LOCAL PARTY OFFICIALS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

4. A YUNNAN DAILY EDITORIAL OF DECEMBER 15 AGAIN VOICED IMPATIENCE OVER THE LOCAL RADICALS' REFUSAL TO COME FORWARD AND CONFESS THEIR CRIMES. THE ARTICLE NOTED THAT A FEW FOLLOWERS OF THE GANG" IN YUNNAN "ARE EVEN TODAY STILL WAITING TO SEE WHICH WAY THE WIND BLOWS" AND HAVE ACTUALLY RESORTED TO "ESTABLISHING TIES." SPEAKING AT A MASS RALLY ATTENDED BY 200,000 PEOPLE ON DECEMBER 14, PARTY OFFICIALS IN YUNNAN CALLED FOR THOROUGH INVESTIGATIONS OF THE GANG'S ACTIVITIES IN THE PROVINCE AND SINGLED OUT A KUNMING PARTY SECRETARY -- NOT NAMED --FOR ATTACK (HK 14511).
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5. TROUBLES APPEAR TO BE PLAGUING SINKINANG, HEILUNGKIANG, KWANGSI, SHANSI, AND CHEKIANG. THERE ARE INDICATIONS IN

PROVINCIAL BROADCASTS THAT INVESTIGATIONS ARE UNDERWAY AND THAT A CERTAIN NUMBER OF DEEP-SEATED FACTIONAL PROBLEMS REMAIN IN THOSE EAREAS. HOWEVER, SOME OF THE PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED ARE CLEARLY CURRENT ONES AND THE PROVINCIAL MEDIA REFER TO TAKING ACTION AGAINST RUMOR-MONGERING AND COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY POSTES AS WELL AS "BEATING, SMASHING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND LOOTING." IN MOST OF THESE AREAS, PEKING WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY IN GETTING LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO COMPLY WITH ITS LENIENCY PRINCIPLES. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

THE UNITED STATES

6. FILTERING PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER'S APPOINTMENTS THROUGH ITS ANTI-SOVIET PRISM, A HONG KONG COMMUNIST PRESS COMMENTARY EXPRESSED IMPLICIT APPROVAL FOR ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI AS HEAD OF THE NSC AND A PREFERENCE FOR JAMES SCHLESINGER OVER HAROLD BROWN AT DEFENSE. BROWN'S APPOINTMENT HAS NOT YET BEEN REPORTED IN THE LOCAL COMMUNIST PRESS. A TRANSLATER'S NOTE IN THE TA KUNG PAO, INTRODUCING EXCERPTS FROM SENATOR MANSFIELD'S RECENT REPORT TO THE SENATE ON HIS CHINA TRIP, CITED AMERICAN PRESS REPORTS THAT MANSFIELD MIGHT BE SELECTED TO REPLACE AMBASSADOR GATES AS HEAD OF USLO. MEANWHILE, BOTH MORNING HONG KONG COMMUNIST PAPERS DECEMBER 17 CARRIED THE TAIPEI AFP STORY ON THE SHU LIN KOU PHASE-DOWN, BUT HAD NO COMMENTARY OF THEIR OWN (HK 14738; TA KUNG PAO DEC. 21, 20 AND 17; WEN WEI PAO DECEMBER 17). LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS

7. DESPITE CONCERTED SOVIET EFFORTS TO PUBLICLY PORTRAY RELATIONS BETWEEN PEKING AND MOSCOW AS ON THE UPTURN, PRC OFFICIALS AND MEDIA ORGANS ARE CLEARLY INDICATING THAT THE PRC POSITION REMAINS UNCHANGED AND THAT THE RECENTLY RESUMED SINO-SOVIET BORDER TALKS ARE MAKING VIRTUALLY NO HEADWAY. THE ANTI-SOVIET REMARKS OF SENIOR VICE-PREMIER LI HSIEN-NIEN AT THE DECEMBER 21 BANQUET HONORING THE VISITING YAR LEADER PROMPTED THE WALK OUT OF THE SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVES (SEE ITEM 5). ACCORDING TO FOREIGN NEWS REPORTS, IN TALKS WITH A JAPANESE CULTURAL DELEGATION, NPC VICE CHAIRMAN TAN CHEN-LIN TOOK THE EXPECTED HARD LINE AGAINST THE SOVIETS AND CRITICIZED BREZHNEV AS MORE "BRUTAL" THAN HIS PREDECESSOR. ANOTHER OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR SOVIET AFFAIRS TOLD THE HOKKAIDO CULTURAL MISSION THAT THE

SOVIET REQUEST FOR RESUMPTION OF THE BORDER TALKS WAS IN LINE WITH MOSCOW EFFORTS TO PRESSURE THE CHINESE WHILE DEALING WITH THE US AND THAT RUSSIAN MILITARY MANEUVERS ON THE BORDER DO NOT SUGGEST SOVIET SINCERITY. MEANWHILE CHIEF CHINESE NEGOTIATOR AT THE BORDER TALKS, VICE FONMIN YU CHAN HAS BEEN BUSY ESCORTING A VISITING ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT AND PARTY DELEGATION AROUND CHINA, THUS PROVIDING ANOTHER CLEAR SIGN THAT THE TALKS ARE NOT PROGRESSING. (SEE ITEM 3). TOKYO KYODO DEC 16 & 17 AND TOKYO MANICHI SHIMBUN DEC 16 NCNA DECEMBER 21) UNCLASSIFIED

EASTERN EUROPE: ROMANIA AND YUGOSLAVIA

8. FOLLOWING A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT AND PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY NICOLAE CEAUSESCU, A CHINESE FRIENDSHIP DELEGATION WOUND UP ITS TRIP TO ROMANIA DECEMBER 15 (WR 50) AND TRAVELED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON TO YUGOSLAVIA. THE CHINESE DELEGATION IS LED BY CHI PENG-FEI, WHOSE TRAVELS TO ROMANIA AND YUGOSLAVIA COME SHORTLY AFTER VISITS TO BOTH COUNTRIES BY SOVIET PARTY BOSS LEONID BREZHNEV. NCNA WAS CAREFUL TO DESIGNATE BOTH PARTY AND GOVERNMENT TITLES FOR CHI WHILE HE WAS IN ROMANIA, BUT USED ONLY HIS GOVERNMENT TITLE AS NPC SECRETARY-GENERAL UPON ARRIVAL IN YUGOSLAVIA TO INDICATE CHINA HAS NO PARTY RELATIONS WITH THE LATTER COUNTRY. IN YUGOSLAVIA, CHI WAS FETED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE YUGOSLAV SOCIALIST ALLIANCE, BUT NCNA DID NOT CARRY ANY BANQUET REMARKS. ACCORDING TO WIRE SERVICE REPORTS FROM BELGRADE, HI IN HIS BANQUET SPEECH REAFFIRMED CHINA'S SUPPORT FOR YUGOSLAVIA'S NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY, INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY (NCNA DEC 15-16, REUTER AND AFP DEC 19). UNCLASSIFIED

9. WHILE CHI AND HIS DELEGATION WERE DEPARTING ROMANIA, A ROMANIAN PARTY AND GOVERNMENT DELEGATION WAS WARMLY RECEIVED IN CHINA. (WR 50). THE DELEGATION WAS FETED BY POLITBURO MEMBER VICE-PREMIER LI HSIEN-NIEN, MET WITH CHAIRMAN HUA, TOURED THE GREAT WALL, AND VISITED CANTON AND SHANGHAI BEFORE DEPARTING DECEMBER 21. TWO OTHER ROMANIAN GROUPS WERE ALSO IN CHINA LAST WEEK, A VACATIONING ROMANIAN OFFICERS GROUP AND A DELEGATION FROM THE ROMANIAN NATIONAL OFFICE OF TOURISM. (NCNA DEC 15-21). UNCLASSIFIED

VIETNAM

10. NCNA REPORTAGE ON THE 4TH VIETNAMESE WORKERS'S CONGRESS WAS LIMITED TO A DECEMBER 20 POST-CONGRESS WRAP-UP WHICH FOCUSED ON THE INTERNAL ASPECTS OF LE DUAN'S POLITICAL REPORT AND MERELY NOTD THAT HE "ANALYZED THE CURRENT WORLD SITUATION AND EXPOUNDED THE VIETNAMESE FOREIGN POLICY." IT ALSO NOTED THE PROPOSED RENAMING OF THE PARTY, AND INDICATED THAT PEKING'S CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO THE CONGRESS

(WR 49) HAD BEEN READ AND "WARMLY WELCOMED." MEANWHILE, NCNA DECEMBER 17 HIGHLIGHTED THE CONTRIBUTION OF CHINESE TECHNICIANS TO VIETNAMESE RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS IN A REPORT ON CEREMONIES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MARKING THE REOPENING OF A "HEAVILY WAR-DAMAGED" OPEN HEARTH FURNACE AT THE THAI NGUYEN IRON AND STEEL COMPLEX. THE DAY AFTER THE FIRST SESSION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE NOW COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM MET, NCNA CARRIED THE TEXT OF THE MESSAGE FROM COMRADE HUA KUO-FENG, ON BEHALF OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY AND PEOPLE, "WARMLY CONGRATULATING" LE DUAN ON HIS ELECTION AS THE PARTY'S GENERAL SECRETARY. (NCNA DEC 17-21) UNCLASSIFIED

YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC

11. CHAIRMAN IBRAHIM MOHAMED AL-HAJDI OF THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC (YAR) ARRIVED IN CHINA FOR A STATE VISIT DECEMBER 20. HIS AIRPORT GREETERS INCLUDED PRC CHAIRMAN AND PREMIER HUA KUO-FENG, VICE-PREMIER LI HSIEN-NIEN AND FOREIGN MINISTER HUANG HUA. A PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL WELCOMED AL-HAMDI, AND FOLLOWING TALKS WITH LI HSIEN-NIEN THE YAR CHIEF OF STATE WAS FETED BY THE CHINESE VICE-PREMIER DECEMBER 21. BOTH THE PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL AND LI'S BANQUET SPEECH REITERATED CHINESE SUPPORT FOR THE ARAB AND PALESTINIAN PEOPLES' JUST STRUGGLE. THE ANTI-SOVIET REMARKS CONTAINED IN LI'S SPEECH PRODUCED THE SECOND WALK-OUT IN A LITTLE OVER TWO MONTHS BY SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS (ITEM 2). AL-HAJDI IN HIS SPEECH REFRAINED FROM ANY ANTI-SOVIET RHETORIC, MADE SPECIFIC REFERENCE -- UNLIKE LI -- TO THE PLO AS THE SOLE LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, AND WAS GLOWING IN HIS PRAISE OF CHINESE ECONOMIC AID TO THE YAR, STATING THAT THE PRC "RANKS FIRST" AMONG THE FRIENDS OF HIS COUNTRY (NCNA DECEMBER 20-21). UNCLASSIFIED
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